

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09DHAHRAN14, SHI'A LEADERS MEET WITH KING AFTER MEDINA INCIDENT

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09DHAHRAN14**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09DHAHRAN14</a>	<a href="#">2009-03-04 15:44</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Consulate Dhahran</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/06/22/116306/wikileaks-saudi-crackdown-on-shiites.html>

VZCZCXRO9418  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHDH #0014/01 0631544  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 041544Z MAR 09  
FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0012  
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDH/AMCONSUL DHAHRAN 0013

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAHRAN 000014

SIPDIS

PASS TO NEA/ARP FOR JOSHUA HARRIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/4/2019

TAGS: [SA](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#)

SUBJECT: SHI'A LEADERS MEET WITH KING AFTER MEDINA INCIDENT

REF: 09 RIYADH 346, 09 DHAHRAN 8, 09 JEDDAH 85, 09 RIYADH 270

DHAHRAN 00000014 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Joseph Kenny, Consul General, EXEC, DOS.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Key Points:

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-- King Abdullah met with more than 100 Shi'a leaders from Qatif, al-Ahsa, and Medina related to the sectarian clashes at Baqi'a cemetery (ref A).

-- Following the meeting, the King announced the immediate release of all 38 detainees involved in the Medina incident.

-- The Shi'a leadership considers the meeting to be a small victory that should calm frustrated Shi'a youth and ease tensions that have persisted since the Baqi'a incident.

-- Shi'a contacts say the Islamic month of Rajab (June 24 - July 22) will be a good indication of whether sectarian tensions have calmed, since Shi'a from all over the world make pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina during that month.

12. (C) Comment:

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-- By meeting with such a high-profile delegation of Shi'a leaders, the King has sent a strong signal of his personal commitment to religious tolerance and desire to bring change and reform to Saudi Arabian society. However, as the King makes progress, expectations among the Shi'a and other Saudis are likely to rise even higher. This meeting with the King should go a long way in relieving sectarian tensions in the Kingdom for now, but the Shi'a will certainly continue to demand more rights.

End key points and comment.

13. (C) SHI'A LEADERS DELIVER MESSAGE TO KING. Following the February 20 sectarian conflicts at Baqi'a cemetery in Medina (ref A), and the unrest that followed in Saudi Shi'a communities (refs B, C), a delegation of 109 Shi'a leaders led by Sheikh Abdullah al-Jeshi met with King Abdullah. The delegation represented the Shi'a communities of al-Ahsa, Qatif, and Medina. According to a prominent Shi'a leader, the delegation presented their concerns about Wahabbi extremists - including but not limited to the religious police - harassment of Shi'a based solely on religious beliefs and practices. They also communicated their version of the incidents leading up to and following the conflict at the Baqi'a cemetery. This meeting took place after the initial request to meet the King on Sunday, March 1 was denied (ref B). The delegation consisted mainly of Shi'a sheikhs and other religious figures.

14. (C) KING IMMEDIATELY RELEASES ALL DETAINEES. Following the delegation's meeting with the King, he reportedly announced the immediate release of all 38 detainees from the Medina incident. Post has not confirmed whether all detainees have been physically released, but Shi'a contacts are certain that it will happen. However, XXXXXXXXXXXX (protect), an elected municipal council member and prominent Shi'a leader, said that the delegation would have eventually secured the detainees' release separately from Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (MbN), Assistant Minister of Interior for Security Affairs, though he admitted that the King made it much easier and quicker.

15. (C) JUSTICE IS LESS IMPORTANT. The delegation also demanded a full, transparent and independent investigation into the incidents at Baqi'a. However, XXXXXXXXXXXX does not expect the results of any investigation to be made public or any unlawful acts to be punished. He said that MbN showed the delegation a video clip of the Baqi'a incident that had clearly been edited in an attempt to convince them that no wrongdoing was committed.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX believes that punishment is not important now in any case and that the meeting was a good "first step" to reducing sectarian tensions in Saudi Arabia and addressing Shi'a concerns.

16. (C) TENSIONS HAVE COOLED DOWN...FOR NOW. Most Shi'a sources believe that the mounting frustrations among the Shi'a youth will diminish after the meeting with the King and the release of the detainees. However, they believe that more will need to be done beyond just clamping down on harassment by the religious police or expanding visiting hours at Baqi'a cemetery. They believe that the SAG must make more public and bold gestures acknowledging the legitimacy of Shi'a Saudis as citizens of equal standing to their Sunni co-religionists. According to a couple of Shi'a activists from Qatif, the Islamic month of Rajab (June 24 - July 22) will be a good test of whether the SAG has addressed the root causes of sectarian tensions. During this month Shi'a from all over the world come to Mecca and Medina during summer holidays and will visit Baqi'a cemetery and other Shi'a holy sites.

KENNY